

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An automated category management tool comprising;
  - a database having a plurality of distinct data sets at least one of said data sets containing pricing information on consumer products;
  - 5 a first input module capable of receiving data from at least one of said data sets from a user of said tool, said input module providing end user data to said database to create a comparative analysis for said end user;
  - a first output module for displaying said analysis of said end user data in comparative association with at least one of said data sets; and
  - 10 wherein said comparative analysis creates a category management plan to increase product sales.
2. An automated category management tool as recited in claim 1 wherein said at least one of said data sets relates to cereal.
- 15 3. A system for managing consumer product categories, comprising;
  - a consumer product database provided at a first location and containing variable retail data for at least one consumer category;
  - at least one remote terminal for accessing said consumer product
  - 20 database;
  - a central database having a pre-defined data set relating to said at least one consumer product category;
  - a communication arrangement connecting said at least one remote terminal to said consumer product database; and
  - 25 wherein said consumer product database provides category specific information to said remote terminal to create a marketing analysis for a retailer of products in said at least one category.

4. A system for managing consumer product categories as recited in claim 3, wherein said at least one consumer product category is cereal.

5           5. A category management method comprising:  
            obtaining data from plural data sources including a consumer purchase tracking data set and a demographics data set;  
            analyzing said data sources to provide an integrated category management report; and  
10           dynamically including or excluding further detailed information from said report depending on whether additional analysis results are available.

            6. A category management method comprising:  
            obtaining data from plural data sources including a consumer purchase  
15           tracking data set and a demographics data set;  
            using automated analysis to analyze said data sources; and  
            providing an integrated category management report based at least in part on said analysis.

20           7. A category management method comprising:  
            obtaining data from plural data sources including at least a consumer purchase tracking data set, a demographics data set and at least one planogram;  
            analyzing said data sources;  
            providing an integrated category management report based at least in  
25           part on said analysis; and  
            delivering said report at least in part over a network.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein said report includes interactive fields that can call up additional information.

9. The method of claim 7 further including using automated analysis to  
5 analyze said data sources.

10. The method of claim 7 further including dynamically including or excluding further detailed information from said report depending on whether additional analysis results are available.

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11. The method of claim 7 further including providing a score card that tracks said category management over time.

12. The method of claim 7 wherein said network is the Internet.

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13. The method of claim 7 wherein said network is a local area network.

14. A method of tracking category management over time comprising:  
20 using plural data sources to develop category management summary information;

displaying said summary information in a score card format;

at a later time, using updated data sources to develop updated category management summary information; and

25 displaying said updated information in said score card to show whether there has been improvement.